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“Why Stop Learning?”

DR. WIL LOU GRAY
DIRECTOR EMERITUS
1883 - 1984



Dr. Wil Lou Gray was most noted for beginning the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School in Youngs Community of Laurens County. The Opportunity School evolved from her long struggle in fighting illiteracy in South Carolina. Dr. Gray's work spanned more than half a century. She served as South Carolina's first State Director of Adult Education for much of that time. She organized the first night school classes in 1915 and launched the first "Write Your Name Campaigns" in South Carolina. Dr. Gray authored books about teaching adults how to read and write.

Long recognized as a pioneer in adult education and a leader to abolish illiteracy, Dr. Gray died in 1984 at age 100. Her portrait was placed in the State House, becoming only the third woman in the history of South Carolina so honored. She followed Ann Pamela Cunningham, the preserver of Mount Vernon, and Mary McLeod Bethune, co-founder of Bethune-Cookman College in Florida and an adviser to President Hoover and President Roosevelt.

Upon retiring from the education profession in 1957, she channeled her energies toward the senior citizens movement, starting the Federation of Older Americans currently housed on the Opportunity School campus. Her work with Senior Citizens paved the way to the creation of the South Carolina Commission on Aging.

Dr. Gray received her B.A. degree from Columbia College and her M.A. degree in Political Science from Columbia University.

During her long and fruitful life, Wil Lou Gray received many awards for her accomplishments. She received honorary doctorate degrees from her alma mater Columbia College, from Clemson University and Winthrop College. The University of South Carolina awarded her the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award. In 1959 Bob Hope recognized Dr. Gray as the National Woman of the Year while appearing on his television show. The Rotary Club of Columbia presented her with the Paul Harris Fellow Award in 1980, the first time a woman had received this honor. The General Assembly gave her a citation upon her retirement in 1957, and she was inducted into the South Carolina Hall of Fame in 1974.

WHAT IS THE OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL?

The Opportunity School is an agency of state government chartered for the purpose of teaching academic and vocational training to at risk students and adults, fifteen years of age and older, in a good citizenship environment.

Often an individual's home-school-community environment impedes rather than enhances the chance that he will remain in school; therefore, our college-like residential setting helps prepare for the continuation of educational goals for each student.

WHAT COURSES ARE OFFERED?

Courses are offered on all levels of difficulty as follows; reading, writing, social studies, science, mathematics, algebra, English, and French. Each classroom is equipped with the latest teaching materials including computers.



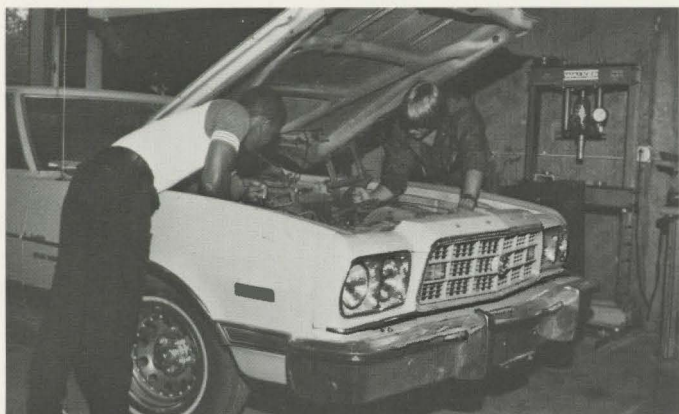
Computer assisted instruction is utilized in each class

WHAT TRAINING IS AVAILABLE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION?

A vocational profile is developed for each student, documenting his interests, information needs, and more. Individual students are invited to participate in small group seminars on topics that include: interviewing skills, decision-making in the workplace, opportunities available in technical colleges, trade schools and the military.

Seven areas of vocational instruction provide each student the chance to prepare for employment. The vocational courses include Typing/Word Processing, Auto Mechanics, Building and Facility Maintenance, Food Service, Building Construction and Nursing Assistants. The purpose of our

vocational training is to assist a student to be employed. Entry-level skills for job placement are emphasized in each class.



Vocational Education provides entry-level employment

IS THE SCHOOL CO-EDUCATIONAL?

Yes. Admission is open to both sexes. Approximately 40% of the students are female.

WHAT ARE THE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS?

Each student must complete an application form for admission, be at least fifteen years old, and provide a recent medical physical from a local physician. An Application for Admission may be obtained by either writing or calling the Opportunity School or by asking your local school principal or guidance counselor for assistance.

State law requires every student to have immunization shots. Appropriate medical forms must be completed and submitted with the admission application. Your local Health Department provides free shots and the proper immunization forms. (*DHEC FORM 1125; TITLED, SOUTH CAROLINA CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNIZATION*)

ARE BOARDING FACILITIES AVAILABLE?

Yes. Five dormitories are available with a total bed capacity of 225. The dormitories are of modern construction and are air conditioned. Most rooms provide space for two occupants. Students are required to provide bed linen for a single size bed, blanket, pillow, towels and necessary health articles for the duration of their stay. Individual TV's and radios are optional depending upon the student earning that privilege. Students may choose to remain on campus during

weekends or go home. Meals and supervision are provided for those who stay.



Students live and study in modern facilities

DO YOU PROVIDE HEALTH CARE?

A licensed nurse practitioner is employed to oversee any illness or sickness occurring in every day life. Should emergency services be necessary, local health and medical facilities work with the Opportunity School providing services to our students. However, if a student becomes too ill then he shall be asked to leave campus and allowed to return once he has recuperated.

WHEN MAY A STUDENT ENTER THE SCHOOL?

Registration is offered at least once each month or by appointment with the Director of Admissions.

HOW ARE STUDENTS PLACED WHEN THEY ARE ENROLLED?

Each new student takes a placement test to determine his achievement level in three subject areas: reading, English and mathematics. The student is assigned to classes in each subject area commensurate with his achievement in that subject. The reading score is used for placement in science and social studies.

A student remains in his achievement grouping until his instructor thinks that he is ready to move to a higher level. This move can take place at any time during the year.

Students, who are working for a standard high school diploma, are placed according to their needs in meeting the

requirements for graduation as determined by the State Board of Education.



Individual instruction enables students to study at their level

HOW DOES A STUDENT GRADUATE?

A student may graduate by making a score of 225 or more on the high school equivalency examination (GED), which is administered monthly by the State Department of Education. In addition to the GED Certificate he shall receive an Opportunity School diploma.

A student may choose to work for the standard high school diploma, which is given by all state accredited high schools. Twenty or more Carnegie Units must be earned and the attendance requirements met as specified by the State Board of Education.

MAY I GRADUATE IF I'VE MISSED TOO MANY DAYS?

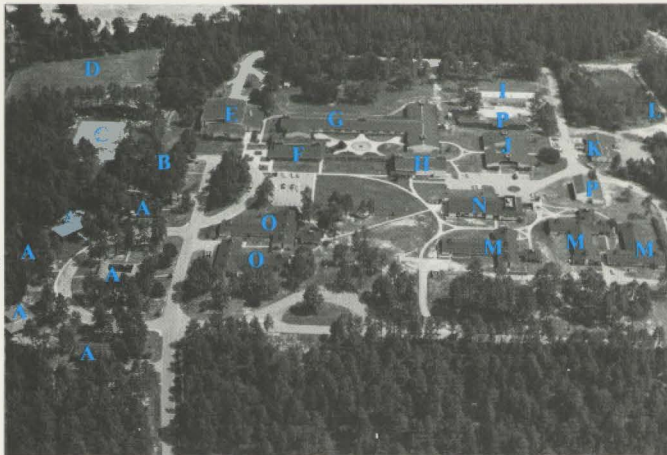
State law mandates every student must attend at least a minimum of 170 school days each year to receive Carnegie Units of Credit. However, the Opportunity School has a one-month extended academic year enabling students to make up to a maximum of 20 school days; thus, meeting state attendance requirements enabling them to complete Carnegie Units of Credit.

IS THE SCHOOL ACCREDITED?

Yes. The Opportunity School is fully accredited by the State Department of Education, thus allowing every GED or diploma graduate the chance to attend a four-year college upon graduation.



- A. Staff Housing
- B. Research and Training Center
- C. Tennis Courts
- D. Athletic Field
- E. Gymnasium/Student Center
- F. Administration Building
- G. Classroom Building/Principal's Office
- H. Auditorium
- I. Vocational Educational Building



- J. Psychological/Social Services
Vocational Rehabilitation Unit
- K. Maintenance
- L. Greenhouse
- M. Male Dormitories
- N. Cafeteria
- O. Female Dormitories
- P. Storage



Civic organizations donate college scholarships

HOW IS THE SCHOOL FINANCED?

Because the Opportunity School is an agency of state government, state appropriations are used to fund a large majority of the budget. The balance of the budget is provided through a small percentage of Federal Funds and by institutional revenue such as student fees of approximately \$1,300 per year.

MAY I ATTEND THE SCHOOL IF I CANNOT AFFORD THE COST?

Yes. A number of scholarships are provided each year while other students are sponsored through the Vocational Rehabilitation Department and various agencies. If a student is determined truant then he may attend free. The Admission Office will assist in securing sources of scholarship if needed.

HOW DOES THE OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL NEEDS?

A team of staff members addresses the academic/vocational, psychological/social, recreational/dormitory life, and health/medical aspects that make up a student's life at the school. This team assists each student in setting realistic goals and objectives based upon abilities, needs, and interests. Sometimes a student's parents are asked to become involved in the process, and their input can be extremely beneficial.

HOW MAY I GET MORE INFORMATION?

You may write to the Director of Admissions, West Campus Road, West Columbia, S.C. 29169; or call (803) 739-5480. Effective Fall, 1989, Telephone (803) 822-5480.

ARE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES PROVIDED TO BOARDING STUDENTS?

An annual activities calendar is issued during student orientation. Many group and individual sports, games, activities, trips, and programs are planned by the staff and students. The Opportunity School participates in athletic events as a member of Region III, Class A of the South Carolina High School League.

Region III member high schools include Blackville-Hilda, Denmark-Olar, Hunter-Kinard-Tyler, North, Pelion, Ridge Spring-Monetta, Wagener-Salley, and Williston-Elko.

Two lighted tennis courts, a well-equipped gymnasium, and a lighted athletic field are also used by our residential students during and after class hours. Campus-wide and dorm activities are planned on a daily basis through the Office of Student Affairs.



The annual beauty pageant is the highlight of each year

WHAT IS THE CAFETERIA SCHEDULE? MONDAY THRU FRIDAY

BREAKFAST	7:30	AM
LUNCH	12:25	PM
DINNER	5:00	PM

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

BRUNCH	11:00	AM
DINNER	4:00	PM

STUDENT RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School seeks to provide for students an environment in which they may develop to their fullest potential. As in any organization, it is necessary to establish rules of acceptable behavior which exist for the good of the entire group.

Students at our school are required to conduct themselves in a manner that will contribute to the establishment of an atmosphere that will be conducive to learning and to teaching. Additionally, we must maintain an atmosphere in which students feel safe and comfortable, and students must not act in a manner contrary to this. To this end, students are not allowed to have in their possession any weapons, alcohol, or any narcotics or controlled substances. Students who choose to violate these regulations are subject to disciplinary action by the Opportunity School and may also be subject to action by the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

The Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School has the right to conduct such general and specific searches as may be necessary to ensure that these policies are complied with.



Local organizations recognize our students for their accomplishments

WHAT TIME ARE CLASSES? MONDAY THRU THURSDAY

8:15 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

FRIDAY

8:15 a.m.-12:00 noon

HISTORY

In 1921 the first vacation boarding school for girls and women was opened as an experiment at Tamasee, the mountain school of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The requirements for registration to this school were novel in that no pupil could be admitted who had gone further than the fifth grade or who could attend the public school. The experiment proved so successful that the following summer the school moved to Lander College and then in 1923 Erskine College opened its doors so that men could attend.

The school was so successful with the one-month summer program that Dr. Wil Lou Gray, its founder, asked the Federal Government in 1946 to deed to the State of South Carolina the buildings and grounds of the then vacated Columbia Army Air Base. The request was granted on a ten-year probationary basis. The school then became a ten-month school and offered academic training to any person who had reached his sixteenth birthday and wanted to finish his education. In 1957 the buildings and grounds were deeded to the state; and since that time, most of the buildings have been replaced with modern facilities.

More than 27,000 students have enrolled for educational pursuits at the school and more than 1500 have passed the GED for a certificate and/or diploma since 1921.

The school is owned and operated by the State of South Carolina. It is administered by a Board of Trustees who are elected by the Legislature. The school receives its income from state appropriations and fees paid by students.

The Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School also serves as a center for conferences for many groups.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE WRITE TO:

DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS

The Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School
West Campus Road
West Columbia, South Carolina 29169
(803) 739-5480
Effective Fall, 1989
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